



## FACT SHEET

### CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM

#### GENERAL PLAN UPDATE INFORMATION

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#### BACKGROUND

The Conservation Subdivision Program (CSP) is a program to encourage residential subdivisions that preserve environmental resources balancing planned densities and community character with environmental protection. Some tools exist to achieve these goals, many of which are already encouraged by Federal, State and local regulations. However, the CSP would revise requirements to the Lot Area Averaging and Planned Residential Development processes to provide flexibility by removing unnecessary regulations that discourage conservation oriented design.

#### PROPOSED REGULATIONS

The CSP will be implemented through revisions to the Subdivision Ordinance, Resource Protection Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance. The Subdivision Ordinance will be amended to include provisions for protection of environmental resources, and establishing percentages of resources to be avoided for Semi Rural 10 and lower densities. The Resource Protection Ordinance will be revised to allow additional steep slope encroachment if significant conservation of sensitive resources is included as part of the subdivision. The Groundwater Ordinance will be revised to add a waiver for the minimum lot sizes required by the Groundwater Limitations Map, down to 67% of the required parcel size, with the implementation of a conservation subdivision.

Another method the CSP will be implemented is through the decoupling of the minimum lot sizes included in the Zoning Ordinance from the General Plan designations. In many cases, the General Plan Update is reducing the density and is not proposing on increasing the minimum lot size in the zoning ordinance. The effect would be to allow some flexibility in a development project with regard to the minimum lot size. In January 2010 staff sent preliminary recommendations to the Community Planning and Sponsor Groups for Zoning Use Regulations and Minimum Lot Sizes, these are being discussed and will be sent out for a general public review in April.

Further reductions in minimum lot size would be allowed with revisions to Lot Area Averaging and Planned Residential Developments; however specific findings for compatibility with community character would be required.

#### COMMUNITY CHARACTER

It is a goal of the CSP to balance community character with development potential and environmental resources, and a key component in the balance is provisions set in individual community plans. It is a concern of many communities that the program will result in small lot subdivisions that are not consistent with the established community character. DPLU coordinated with communities and has included qualitative and quantitative criteria in some of the Community Plans, even establishing minimum lot sizes for individual communities. These community specific regulations calibrate the program to individual communities in the diverse County of San Diego. Findings would need to be made during implementation of a Conservation Subdivision, which would be a discretionary action.

#### PLANNING COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEE: CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION PROGRAM

On February 5, 2010, a Planning Commission Subcommittee met to discuss specific components of the CSP, including the balancing of community character in Community Plans.

At the meeting, the Subcommittee members commented in support of staff's recommendation on the proposed CSP and added the following recommendations:

- Conservation subdivisions are not allowed by-right, but projects that comply with the requirements and adhere to design guidelines should be allowed to process.
- Community Design Guidelines should be prepared to facilitate implementation of the program.
- Additional consideration should be given to the limits on lot size in the Groundwater Ordinance when developing community standards.
- Further review is needed for Land Use Policy LU-14.4 which is related to limitations on sewer service areas.
- The use of alternative wastewater (septic) systems should be supported.
- Open space easements dedicated as part of the CSP should involve a third party (in addition to the County) to ensure the long term preservation of the easement.

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- Minimum lot size standards are appropriate in each community plan; however, further community coordination and consideration of the draft standards is necessary.